

REMARKS:

Entry of the above amendments, and reconsideration and further examination of this application as amended is respectfully requested. Claims 1-38 and 45-61 remain in the application.

The amendments submitted above to certain claims have been done so either in response to the Examiner's rejections or objections or to correct claim dependency, to correct antecedent basis, to put the claim in conventional form, to correct punctuation, improper word usage, and the like. No new matter has been introduced through any of these amendments.

A. Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

1. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 13-16 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 14 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for these amendments may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**. Applicant submits that Antoni et al. does not teach nor suggest the additional limitations. Applicant claims in amended independent claims 1 and 14 "a first ring (**108**) joinable to said first end (**410/412** (of said housing **102**)), and "a first flange cap (**106**) joinable to said first ring (**108**) . . . wherein said first flange cap (**106**) is separated from contact with said first end (**410/412**) of said housing (**102**) by said first ring (**108**)" (page 4, lines 10-12 and page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4** in the specification). The ring **15** of Antoni et al. **is not joined** to the first end **19b/13b** of the housing **1b**. Instead, the end cap **4b** is joined to the first end **19b** of the housing **1b** with glue **21b**. The flange cap **4b** **is clearly joined** to the first end **19b/13b** of the housing **1b**. See Antoni et al. col. 4, lines 51-54 and FIG. 3. Indeed, the ring **15** of Antoni et al. is separated from the

housing **1b** by the peripheral channel **14b**, which is arranged between two flanges **18b** and **19b**. Clearly, the structure of Applicants invention is substantially different from Antoni et al. and the resulting seals that are formed, due to the nature of these different structures, in different places in comparison to each other. Applicants first seal is between the flange cap **106** and the first ring **108**. The first seal of Antoni et al. is between end cap **4b** and end wall **3b**.

Thus, the structure of Applicants invention, and how it is connected, and the location of the first seal, is substantially different from that of Antoni et al. A carefully examination of the cited Antoni et al. reference to the text and the Figures of Applicants disclosure clearly show that the Antoni et al. reference does not disclose expressly or inherently all of the elements and limitations of Applicant's amended independent claims 1 and 14. The Antoni et al. reference therefore does not meet the statutory standard and should be withdrawn. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 1 and 14 are not anticipated by Antoni et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claims 2-4, 13, 15-16, and 25 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1 or 14 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claims 1 and 14, Applicant likewise believes that claims 2-4, 13, 15-16, and 25 also overcome the Examiner's rejection based on Antoni et al. under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and retraction of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

2. The Examiner has rejected claims 26-30, 34 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 26 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for this amendment may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**. Applicant submits that Antoni et al. does not teach nor suggest the additional limitations. Applicant claims in amended independent

claims 1 and 14 “a first ring (108) joinable to said first end (410/412 (of said housing 102)), and “a first flange cap (106) joinable to said first ring (108) . . . wherein said first flange cap (106) is separated from contact with said first end (410/412) of said housing (102) by said first ring (108)” (page 4, lines 10-12 and page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to FIGS. 1, 2, and 4 in the specification). The ring 15 of Antoni et al. is **not joined** to the first end 19b/13b of the housing 1b. Instead, the end cap 4b is joined to the first end 19b of the housing 1b with glue 21b. The flange cap 4b is **clearly joined** to the first end 19b/13b of the housing 1b. See Antoni et al. col. 4, lines 51-54 and FIG. 3. Indeed, the ring 15 of Antoni et al. is separated from the housing 1b by the peripheral channel 14b, which is arranged between two flanges 18b and 19b. Clearly, the structure of Applicants invention is substantially different from Antoni et al. and the resulting seals that are formed, due to the nature of these different structures, in different places in comparison to each other. Applicants first seal is between the flange cap 106 and the first ring 108. The first seal of Antoni et al. is between end cap 4b and end wall 3b.

Thus, the process of preparing Applicants invention, and how it is connected, and where the seals are formed, is substantially different from that of Antoni et al. A carefully examination of the cited Antoni et al. reference to the text and the Figures of Applicants disclosure clearly show that the Antoni et al. reference does not disclose expressly or inherently all of the elements and limitations of Applicant’s amended independent claim 26. The Antoni et al. reference therefore does not meet the statutory standard and should be withdrawn. Thus, Applicant believes that claim 26 is not anticipated by Antoni et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claims 27-30, 34 and 35 depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 26 and include all the elements and limitations thereof. As a result, and in light of the foregoing remarks concerning independent claim 26, Applicant likewise believes that claims 27-30, 34 and 35 also overcome the Examiner's rejection based on Antoni et al. under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), and retraction of that rejection in respect to these claims is respectfully requested.

B. Rejection of Claims
Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

1. The Examiner has rejected, in the alternative, claims 26-30, 34 and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 26 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for these amendments may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**. Applicant submits that Antoni et al. does not teach nor suggest the additional limitations. Applicant repeats the remarks made above in Sections A1 and A2. The structure of Antoni et al. requires only one joining of the end cap **4b** to the first end **19b/13b** of housing **1b**, with a ring **15** internal to the end cap **4b** therein. Applicants invention, on the other hand, is entirely different, requiring **two separate joinings**, the ring **108** to the housing **102**, and the end cap **106** to the ring **108** forming the seal in a **different location** than the seal of Antoni et al. The end cap **106** and housing **102** **do not contact** each other, being **separated** by the ring **108**. There is no suggestion or motivation in Antoni et al. for one skilled in the art to adopt the structure of Applicants invention. The conventional structure of Antoni et al. teaches one skilled in the art **away** from the different structure of Applicants invention. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 26-30, 34 and 35 are not obviated by Antoni et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

2. The Examiner has rejected claims 8-11, 20-23, 31-33, and 55-58 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586 in view of Lacy et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,280,619.

First, Applicant believes the Examiner meant to cite claims 30-33, and not 31-33, since claims 8, 20, and 30 are identical in structure. Applicant is making this assumption, and is responding accordingly.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, 26, and 55 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for these amendments may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**. Applicant repeats the remarks made above in Sections A1, A2, and B1. Applicant submits that Antoni et al. does not teach nor suggest the additional limitations.

a. Regarding claims 8, 20, and 30, they include all the elements and limitations of amended independent claims 1, 14, and 26 from which they depend. In addition, Antoni et al. does not teach spin welding, but does teach welding. However, Antoni et al. **does not teach nor suggest** welding the ring **15** to the first end **19b/13b** of the housing **1b**, nor the welding of the end cap **4b** to the ring **15**, but instead teaches welding the end cap **4b** to the end wall **3b** with glue **20b** as discussed in the remarks above. Lacy et al. teaches spin welding, but also **does not teach nor suggest** spin welding the ring **108** to the end of the filter housing **102**, nor the spin welding of the flange cap **106** to the ring **108**, but instead teaches spin welding the end cap **26** to the end of the filter body **22** (see **FIGS. 4 and 5** of Lacy et al.) Lacy et al. does not even have a comparable ring **108** structure. Thus, combining the spin welding teaching of Lacy et al. with the structure of Antoni et al. cannot arrive at applicants invention, nor is there a suggestion in the art to do so. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 8, 20, and 30 are patentable over Antoni et al. in view of Lacy et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

b. Regarding claims 9, 21, and 31, they include all the elements and limitations of amended independent claims 1, 14, and 26 from which they depend. In addition, Applicants claim “a first plurality of nubs (**120**) on an outer portion of said first ring (**108**)” and “a second plurality of nubs (**120**) on an outer portion of said second ring (**108**); wherein said first and second plurality of nubs assist in said spin welding” (page 4, lines 18-20 and **FIGS. 1-3** in the specification). The examiner cites in Lacy et al. spin weld ledge **46** (col. 3, line 51 and **FIGS. 4 and 5**) as a “nub”, but this structure is only an **annular ring** with no protrusions on an outer surface that can be called “nubs” to assist with spin welding. The inner surface of spin weld ledge **46** of the body **22** is forced against the outer surface of spin weld tail **72** (also an annular structure) of the cap **26**, and rotated at high torque about their common axis. Friction generates heat that softens and melts the surfaces together (col. 3, lines 46-53 and **FIGS. 4 and 5**).

The Examiner states that the nubs of claims 9, 21, and 31 are comparable to spin weld ledge 46. The Examiner has **completely misunderstood** the structure and function of the nubs of Applicants invention. The nubs 120 of Applicants invention **do not melt**, nor are they intended to melt, and are a permanent part of the structure of Applicants filter. The nubs 120 are engaged by the spin welding machinery to better impart spin to the ring 108 (see page 4, lines 18-20) and themselves do not come into contact with any other portion of the end cap 106 or the housing 102 whereby friction would cause them to melt. **FIG. 1** shows a fully assembled filter 100, after spin welding has occurred, with nubs 120 plainly visible and marked. The cross sections of the ring 108 shown in **FIGS. 3D** and **4** are taken at a section not passing through a nub 120. Otherwise, a nub would clearly be shown in these views as well. Spin weld ledge 46, on the other hand, will melt and produce flash as it is spun in contact with spin weld tail 72. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 9, 21, and 31 are patentable over Antoni et al. in view of Lacy et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

c. Regarding claims 10, 22, and 32, they include all the elements and limitations of amended independent claims 1, 14, and 26 from which they depend. In addition, Applicants claim “at least one annular channel (408) located between said first ring (108) and said first end (410/412 (of housing 102)); and at least one annular channel (408) located between said second ring (108) and said second end (410/412 (of housing 102)); wherein each of said at least one annular channel accommodates a flow of flash material during said spin welding” (page 14, lines 21-23 and **FIG. 4** in the specification). Antoni et al. does not teach annular channels for capturing flash from spin welding. It appears that in Lacy et al., lip 70, shield 48 and spin weld ledge 46 form an annular channel that would capture some flash during spin welding of cap 26 to filter body 22. But Lacy et al. does not teach an annular channel between the end 410/412 of housing 102 and the ring 108, but instead teaches an annular channel between the filter body 22 and the end cap 26. Thus, combining the annular channel for spin welding of Lacy et al. with the structure of Antoni et al. cannot arrive at applicants invention, nor is there a suggestion in the art to do so. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 10, 22, and 32 are patentable over Antoni et al. in view of Lacy et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

d. Regarding claims 11, 23, and 33, they include all the elements and limitations of amended independent claims 1, 14, and 26 from which they depend. In addition, Applicants claim “at least one annular channel (320/406/422) located between said first ring (108) and said first flange cap (106); and at least one annular channel (320/406/422) located between said second ring (108) and said second flange cap (106); wherein each of said at least one annular channel accommodates a flow of flash material during said spin welding” (page 15, lines 1-7 and FIG. 4 in the specification). Antoni et al. **does not teach nor suggest** annular channels for capturing flash from spin welding. It appears that in Lacy et al., lip 70, shield 48 and spin weld ledge 46 form an annular channel that would capture some flash during spin welding of cap 26 to filter body 22. But Lacy et al. **does not teach nor suggest** an annular channel between the ring 108 and the end cap 106, but instead teaches an annular channel between the filter body 22 and the end cap 26. Thus, combining the annular channel for spin welding of Lacy et al. with the structure of Antoni et al. cannot arrive at applicants invention. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 11, 23, and 33 are patentable over Antoni et al. in view of Lacy et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

e. Regarding claims 55-58, Applicant has amended independent claim 55 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for these amendments may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**. Applicant submits that Antoni et al. does not teach nor suggest the additional limitations. Applicants repeat the remarks made above in Sections A1, A2, B1, B2c, and B2d. The ring 15 of Antoni et al. **is not joined** to the first end 19b/13b of the housing 1b. Instead, the end cap 4b is joined to the first end 19b of the housing 1b with glue 21b. The flange cap 4b **is clearly joined** to the first end 19b/13b of the housing 1b. Indeed, the ring 15 of Antoni et al. is separated from the housing 1b by the peripheral channel 14b, which is arranged between two flanges 18b and 19b. Antoni et al. **does not teach nor suggest** accommodating residue from spin welding. Lacy et al. does teach accommodating residue from spin welding of the end cap to the end of the filter housing, but **does not teach nor**

suggest spin welding the ring to the end of the filter housing, nor the spin welding of the flange cap to the ring, and accommodating residue from both of these welds with structures pertinent to the spin welding, but instead teaches spin welding the end cap to the end of the filter. Lacy et al. does not even have a comparable ring structure. Moreover, Applicants invention requires **two separate joinings**, forms the seal in a different location than the seal of Antoni et al., and has annular channels in locations not taught by Lacy et al. The inlet and outlet ports (5/6, 11/12) of Antoni et al. are both located in the end caps (4), whereas only one set of inlet/outlet ports (118, FIG. 1) in Applicants invention are in the end cap (112), and the other set of inlet/outlet ports (110, FIG. 1) are located in the housing (102). Thus, combining the teachings of Lacy et al. with the structure of Antoni et al. cannot arrive at applicants invention, nor is there a suggestion in the art to do so. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 55-58 are patentable over Antoni et al. in view of Lacy et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

3. The Examiner has rejected claims 50, 51 and 53 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eguchi, U.S. Patent No. 5,472,601.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 50 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for these amendments may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**. Applicant submits that Eguchi does not teach nor suggest the additional limitations. The Examiner asserts that Eguchi teaches a housing (case 2) with a first end having a ring (stop ring 1) joinable to the first end of the housing. However, the stop ring 1 of Eguchi is integral to the housing, not joinable to the housing as in Applicant's invention. In Applicant's invention, the flange cap 106 is joinable to the ring 108 (page 5, lines 25-26 and **FIG. 4** in the specification), forming a first seal, whereas in Eguchi the flange cap (header, col. 6, lines 45-50) is joinable to the case 2 with no mention of a seal being formed thereby, though one is inherently created. Eguchi does not teach nor suggest

the ring forming a connection between the housing and the end cap and thus separating the housing and the end cap from contact with each other.

Applicants claim in independent claim 50 “a first plurality of rounded ridges (318) on an upper surface of said first annular anchor and a second plurality of rounded ridges (318) on a lower surface of said first annular anchor” (page 12, lines 11-15 and **FIGS. 3D** and **4** in the specification). The Examiner states that Eguchi teaches more than one ring to improve anchoring with upper and lower edges, but does not teach multiple rounded ridges on the ring, but asserts that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that there could be one or more rings having one or more ridges. However, Eguchi, and none of the other prior art cited by the Examiner or proffered by Applicant in Applicant’s Information Disclosure Statement give the slightest hint or suggestion for such a multiple rounded ridges structure. To the contrary, prior art stop rings have been almost universally uniform in their structure, being square or wedge shaped with only two edges, which are inherent in such shapes. None of them show or suggest a plurality ridges, nor that the ridges are rounded, on an upper surface and a lower surface of a single ring. Apart from impermissible hindsight, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to develop the multiple rounded ridges on the upper and lower surfaces of the single ring structure as claimed by Applicant.

The Examiner asserts that one skilled in the art would round off the sharp edges for safety. As taught by Applicant’s invention, the ridges are rounded for purposes of increasing the surface area treatable through surface treatment (308), enhancing the effects of modifying the surface energy of the ring to improve its anchoring ability (page 11, lines 8-11 and **FIG. 3D**), not for safety. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 50, 51 and 53 are not obviated by Eguchi. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

4. The Examiner has rejected claim 52 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eguchi, U.S. Patent No. 5,472,601 in view of Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586.

Applicants respectfully traverse. Applicants repeat the remarks made in Sections B-1 and B-3 above. Claim 52 includes all the elements and limitations of amended independent claim 50 from which it depends. In addition, Eguchi does not teach nor suggest all of the elements of Applicants invention. Therefore combining Eguchi with the inlet and outlet ports of Antoni et

al., which are located differently from the inlet/outlet ports of Applicants invention, would not arrive at Applicants invention as claimed in claim 52. Thus, Applicant believes that claim 52 is not obviated by Eguchi in view of Antoni et al. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

5. The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 5-7, 14, 17-19, 26, 36-38, 45-46, 48-51, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eguchi, U.S. Patent No. 5,472,601 in view of Elgas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,922,202.

In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14, 26, 45, and 50 to more distinctly distinguish Applicant's invention through the further limitations of:

"said first flange cap is separated from contact with said first end of said housing by said first ring."

Support for these amendments may be found in the specification on page 4, lines 10-12; page 5, line 25 through page 6, line 3 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**, and page 8, line 19 through page 9, line 14 in reference to **FIGS. 1, 2, and 4**.

Applicants repeat the remarks made in Section B-3 above. Eguchi nor Elgas et al. teach the structure of Applicants invention regarding the connection of the ring to the housing and the ring to the end cap, separating the housing and the end cap from contacting each other, and forming a seal in a location different from Eguchi and Elgas et al. (claims 1, 14, 26, 45, 46, 50). Eguchi nor Elgas et al. teach multiple rounded ridges on an upper and lower surface of the single ring (claims 6, 18, 37, 48, 51) nor would it be obvious to do so, nor is safety a motivation for rounded edges. The remaining dependent claims (claims 5, 7, 17, 19, 36, 38, 49 and 54) also include all of the elements and limitations of their amended independent base claims (claims 1, 14, 26, 45, and 50). Therefore, combining the teaching of Eguchi in view of Elgas et al. by one skilled in the art would not arrive at Applicants invention, nor is there a suggestion in the combination to do so. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

6. The Examiner has rejected claims 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eguchi, U.S. Patent No. 5,472,601 in view of Elgas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,922,202 and further in view of Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586.

Applicants respectfully traverse. Applicant repeats the remarks made above in Sections B3, B4, and B5. Claim 47 is dependent upon claim 46, which is dependent upon amended independent claim 45, and includes all of the elements and limitations therein. In view of the arguments in Sections B3, B4, and B5 above, combining Eguchi and Elgas et al. with the inlet and outlet ports of Antoni et al. would not arrive at applicants invention as claimed in claim 47. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

7. The Examiner has rejected claims 59-61 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eguchi, U.S. Patent No. 5,472,601 in view of Elgas et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,922,202 and further in view of Lacy et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,280,619.

Applicants respectfully traverse. Applicants repeat the remarks made above in Sections B-2, B-3, B-5, and B-7. Claims 59-61 are dependent directly or indirectly upon amended claim 55, and include all of the limitations therein. In view of the remarks made above, the cited references does not teach nor suggest the structure of Applicants invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

8. The Examiner has rejected claims 12 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Antoni et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,236,586 in view of Gizowski et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,432,307.

Applicants respectfully traverse. Applicants repeat the remarks made above in Section B1. Claims 12 and 24 are dependent upon amended claims 1 and 14 respectively, and include all of the limitations therein. In view of the remarks made above, Antoni et al. does not teach nor suggest the structure of Applicants invention, and combining the laser welding of Gizowski et al. would not arrive at Applicant's invention. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request retraction of the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for these claims.

CONCLUSION:


A bona-fide attempt has been made to place this application in condition for allowance. Each of the Examiner's bases for objection and rejection have been addressed and the claims have been amended, canceled, or arguments presented to overcome such rejections. The application is now believed to meet all statutory requirements and is thus believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner's early indication to that effect is, therefore, courteously solicited.

If a telephone conference would expedite allowance or resolve any additional questions, such a call is invited at the Examiner's convenience.

Applicant does not believe that any fees are due with this response. If this is not the case, please charge any additional fees due, or credit any overpayment to, deposit account 50-0792.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: November 6, 2003